

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T BANGKOK 10051

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, TH
SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION FOR JOINT THAI-U.S. EVALUATION OF HELI-
COPTER USE IN NARCOTICS PROGRAM

REF: A. ROBERTS-VANCE MEMO DATED MARCH 29, 1976 B. BANGKOK 0933
C. STATE 027894

SUMMARY: AS FIRST PART OF GENERAL NARCOTICS EVALUATION RECOM-
MENDED BY INTERAGENCY SURVEY TEAM, MISSION PROPOSES THAT PRE-
VIOUSLY PLANNED JOINT THAI-U.S. EVALUATION OF HELICOPTER
USAGE BE INITIATED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE THAI APPEAR
TO BE INTERESTED IN PROCEEDING WITH THE EVALUATION, AND
WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD MOVE AHEAD WHILE THEIR INTEREST
REMAINS HIGH. A COPY OF OUR PROPOSED AGENDA WILL BE SUB-
MITTED BY SEPTTEL FOR DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS.

ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPT
AUTHORIZE MISSION TO RESUME DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RTG ON
JOINT THAI-U.S. EVALUATION OF HELICOPTER USE AND REQUIREMENTS.
END SUMMARY.

1. MISSION HAS REVIEWED THE COPY OF THE INTERAGENCY
SURVEY GROUP'S FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (REF A),
WE PLAN TO COMMENT MORE FULLY ON THE REPORT AFTER WE HAVE
RECEIVED THE INDIVIDUAL ANNEXES. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT
THE MISSION SHOULD IMMEDIATELY START IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
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SECOND GENERAL RECOMMENDATION, TO HOLD A JOINT RTG-U.S. NARCOTICS EVALUATION, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AS THE FIRST STEP OF THIS GENERAL EVALUATION WE PROPOSE TO GO AHEAD WITH THE PREVIOUSLY PLANNED JOINT RTG-U.S. EVALUATION OF HELICOPTER USAGE AND REQUIREMENTS. WE WOULD WELCOME PARTICIPATION OF WASH. REP IF DEPT DEEMS APPROPRIATE.

2. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, WE ADVANCED THIS PROPOSAL SEVERAL MONTHS AGO WITH THE THAI NATIONAL POLICE DEPARTMENT (TNPD) AND THE DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (DTEC). BOTH AGREED TO THE EVALUATION AND WERE READY TO MOVE AHEAD. THE MISSION, HOWEVER, POSTPONED FURTHER ACTION AT THE DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST (REF C). WITH THE INTERAGENCY SURVEY COMPLETED WITH A FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION FOR SUCH AN EVALUATION, WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THAI INTEREST AND START THE EVALUATION AT ONCE. WE ARE SENDING BY SEPTEL A DRAFT HELICOPTER EVALUATION AGENDA FOR DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS. WE PRESENTED THIS AS A TENTATIVE AGENDA WHEN WE FIRST APPROACHED THE THAI LAST DECEMBER.

3. THE EVALUATION OF HELICOPTER USE WILL PERFORM A VALUABLE FUNCTION AS A MEANS OF ESTABLISHING UTILIZATION NORMS AND PROCEDURES TO GAUGE PRODUCTIVITY IN THE FUTURE USE OF THE HELICOPTERS ALREADY PROVIDED UNDER THE CCINC PROGRAM. WHILE "FULL EMPLOYMENT" OF THE HELICOPTERS WON'T PREVENT FUTURE ABUSE, IT WILL TEND TO MAKE IT FAR MORE DIFFICULT, ESPECIALLY IF AVAILABLE FLYING HOURS ARE FULLY PROGRAMMED, CLOSELY MONITORED, AND REPORTED IN DETAIL.

4. AS DEPT AWARE, MISSION HAS RUNG THE BELLS ON THE MISUSE AND UNDERUTILIZATION OF HELICOPTERS PROVIDED BY THE U.S. TO THAILAND WITH PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT, FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI, POLICE DIRECTOR-GENERAL SISUK, AND A RANGE OF THAI POLICE FIGURES. THE NEXT STEP IS TO REITERATE OUR GENERAL CONCERN ABOUT INADEQUATE AND IMPROPER USE OF HELICOPTERS WITH THE WORKING LEVELS OF VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF THE RTG, LOOKING TOWARDS IMPROVED EMPLOYMENT OF THESE VERSATILE AIRCRAFT.

5. DEA PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO FOLLOW-UP ON UTILIZATION

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OF HELICOPTERS PROVIDED BY U.S. BELIEVE THAT THAI POLICE AVIATION DIVISION (WHICH OPERATES THE HELICOPTERS) HAS SUFFICIENT TRAINED CREWS, SPARE PARTS, POL AND BUDGET TO OPERATE THE TWO HELICOPTERS WE HAVE PROVIDED THEM FOR A MINIMUM OF 35 HOURS PER MONTH. ALTHOUGH THE AIRCRAFT WERE AVAILABLE TO OPERATE FOR A MINIMUM OF 35 HOURS PER MONTH, EACH AIRCRAFT ONLY AVERAGED 31 HOURS OF ACTUAL

FLYING HOURS PER MONTH DURING 1975. THIS SHORTFALL IN PERFORMANCE WAS IN PART THE RESULT OF THE FACT THAT THE TNPD AND BPP DETACHMENTS DO NOT YET HAVE A FULLY INTEGRATED CONCEPT FOR USE OF HELICOPTERS IN ANTI-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS. THE EVALUATION WOULD RESULT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION PLAN, WHICH IN TURN COULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC.

6. IN EVALUATION OF HELICOPTER UTILIZATION WE WOULD RAISE WITH THE THAI THE FACT THAT HELICOPTERS PRESENTLY ON HAND ARE NOT RPT NOT BEING FULLY UTILIZED, DESPITE ENCOURAGING RESULTS FROM JANUARY RAID ON HEROIN REFINERY. WE BELIEVE THAT WHEN WE GET ALL ELEMENTS OF RTG TO FOCUS ON FIGURES ON UTILIZATION, THEY WILL SE THAT THIS IS THE CASE AND PERCEIVE NEED FOR MORE EFFECTIVE AND ENERGETIC USE OF EQUIPMENT PROVIDED TO THEM. IF THAI BEGIN TO USE HELICOPTERS AT MORE ACCEPTABLE RATE, TARGETED ON REFINERIES AND OTHER KEY POINTS IN THE NARCOTICS CHAIN, THEY WOULD BEGIN TO ESTABLISH CASE FOR RESUMPTION OF HELICOPTER DELIVERIES. WE BELIEVE THAT THE ISSUE OF WHETHER OR NOT THE THAI NEED THE ADDITIONAL FIVE HELICOPTERS SHOULD NOT BE PREJUDGED BEFORE THE RESULTS OF A DETAILED JOINT EVALUATION ARE IN.

7. ACTION RECOMMENDED: THAT DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZE MISSION TO RESUME DISCUSSIONS WITH RTG ON A JOINT THAI-U.S. EVALUATION OF HELICOPTERS USE WHICH WERE SUSPENDED ON DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS IN FEBRUARY.
WHITEHOUSE

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